

ISSUE 3-4, 2015

SECURITY COMMUNITY

THE OSCE MAGAZINE



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Telephone: +43 1 51436 6267
oscemagazine@osce.org

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Editor
Ursula Froese

Editorial Board
Miroslava Beham, Ursula Froese, Alexey Lyzhenkov,
Marcel Pesko, Sandra Sacchetti, Desiree Schweitzer

Design and Illustrations
Alexandar Rakocevic, AVD

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Front Cover

An Afghan girl
wears her headscarf
before leaving her
home in Kabul,
Afghanistan,
2009 (detail)
© Farzana Wahidy
See also p.32.



The Making of the Helsinki Final Act: a View from Belgrade

When the first phase of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe concluded in Helsinki in July 1973, everyone knew a historic first step had been made towards ending the Cold War. But the Helsinki Final Act was still unwritten. The agreement that became the cornerstone of European security was crafted in phase two of the Conference, not in Finland but in Geneva, Switzerland, from 18 September 1973 to 1 August 1975.

It was a new experiment in international relations. The rules of procedure stipulated that each country had an equal voice, and each had the power of veto. Proposals numbered in the thousands. East and West competed for acceptance of their positions. The neutral and non-aligned states mediated, but also championed their own causes.

Vladimir Bilandzic was a young research fellow for international politics and economics in Belgrade at the time. He joined the delegation of Yugoslavia to the Geneva negotiations as an international security expert for most of the second year. He recalls the dynamics of the negotiations and the special Yugoslav concern to bring a “world dimension” into the agreement on European security.

How were the Geneva meetings organized?

The meetings took place first at the Villa Moynier close to the Palace of Nations, then in the premises of the International Labour Organization and finally in the new International Conference Centre

of Geneva. It was really a mix of formal and informal meetings. Plenaries took place once a week, although later, as the negotiations were coming to an end, they were more frequent because there was a need for the heads of delegation to strike compromises about the most contentious parts of the text.

There were committee meetings for each of the three baskets – on security and the basic principles guiding relations between states (the so-called Helsinki Decalogue), on economic and environmental issues and on humanitarian matters. There were also special working groups, for instance on the Mediterranean and on the non-use of force. Many negotiations were actually conducted in the corridors. There were long coffee breaks which were actually used for informal and bilateral negotiations.



Centre William Rappard, former premises of the International Labour Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, where the CSCE negotiations took place from 1973 to 1974 (Photo: Lamerica)

“Yugoslavia promoted what colloquially was called at that time ‘the world dimension’. It insisted that security in Europe could not be divided from the security of other regions, that Europe shouldn’t be an island of civility while the rest of the world was underdeveloped and suffering from conflicts.”

Very often in the last month, in June 1975, talks went late into the night. But there were also periods before that summer with a relatively easy pace. There were, of course, other international events that affected the discussion – the end of the Vietnam War, for instance – but negotiations proceeded unobstructed by these wider developments.

There were basically three groups of states – Western states, the Soviet Union and members of the Warsaw Pact, and the neutral and non-aligned states. This last group consisted of four neutral states plus Yugoslavia, plus later on Malta and Cyprus. Ireland was neutral as well; however, it was not part of this group.

What was the role of the neutral and non-aligned group?

At the beginning, it was mostly a role of mediation, of finding a middle ground between the two blocs. But later on, the group also presented its own interests and proposals, including one on confidence-building measures.

There was a process for agreeing on common positions. It was a heterogeneous group. In the beginning, the area of common interests was limited mainly to military security and things like that, but later it expanded. Some countries, Austria, Switzerland and Sweden, for instance, took a leading role on human rights. Yugoslavia was not a democratic country with a multi-party system at that time and could not go as far as others. Still, there was common ground – on the rights of national minorities, for instance.

Yugoslavia promoted what colloquially was called at that time “the world dimension”. It insisted that security in Europe could not be divided from the security of other regions, that Europe shouldn’t be an island of civility while the rest of the world was underdeveloped and suffering from conflicts. It therefore argued that this “world dimension” or, in other words, a global approach, should be introduced into the text of the Helsinki Final Act. Formulations in this spirit were indeed included in some of the provisions. For instance, in the introduction to the Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States, the participating States recognized “the need for each of them to make its contribution to the strengthening of world peace and security”. And in Principle IX (Co-operation among States), it is stated that they “will take into account the interest of all in the narrowing of differences in the levels of economic development, and in particular the interest of developing countries throughout the world.” Another example can be found in the section on questions relating to disarmament, where it is stated that the participating States are convinced that effective measures in this field “should result in strengthening peace and security throughout the world.”

Of course, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent developments in Europe, the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the expansion of the European Union, all this has changed. But I think it is still interesting to analyse the dynamics of the negotiations at that time.

How did the negotiations work practically?

The general rule was that, in the text of the Helsinki Final Act, “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.” That’s the phrase which was always used. Theoretically, if just one paragraph had not been adopted, the whole document would have been regarded as not agreed. This is really the approach that was used.

The use of brackets in the text was very common. If delegations saw that there was no agreement on a certain part of the text, in order not to stop the negotiations they would simply say: “let’s put it in brackets and proceed further and come back to it later.” This use of brackets was mastered almost to perfection: at some point there was more text within than outside of them. Sometimes the discussion was about whether there should be commas in the sentences – this was the case regarding the principle of inviolability of frontiers and how borders can be changed by peaceful means. And near the end of the negotiation, the question of different language versions came up, about translation from English, which was the drafting language, into Russian, German, French, Italian and Spanish. There was concern among some delegations that a commitment that may be clear in English would not be as clear in other languages.

It was a very complex negotiation. Parts of the document were conditional upon others. In order to get consensus on one sentence or principle one had to agree simultaneously on another sentence or principle. There were frequently what were called package deals, even overarching different baskets.

There was a strict use of the rule of consensus – it was very much respected. Any delegation, including the smallest one representing the smallest country, could delay or block a decision. This actually happened near the very end, when the whole text of the Helsinki Final Act was agreed, but Malta insisted on a formulation regarding the Mediterranean and blocked the conference for

almost two days until a compromise was found. This was on the front pages of all the newspapers at the time.

And there was a creative use of the clock on the final evening of the negotiations, when at midnight the deadline for agreeing on the text of the Helsinki Final Act was passing. The clock was stopped in the conference room and the fiction adopted that it was finalized in the agreed time.

Today, two years may look like a very long period of negotiation for a document, but one has to realize that the Helsinki Final Act was almost a blank page at the beginning. The basic principles had been agreed already in Helsinki, during the Preparatory Meeting, but not the text itself. Two years of negotiation is, I think, not that long for a text of the magnitude of the Helsinki Final Act.

How would you compare negotiations then and now in the OSCE?

The rule of consensus was the supreme element then and now – this has not changed. Today, in spite of all the difficulties, Europe is obviously much more united than it was. At that time, there was a strong feeling that new ground was being broken in international relations. All the participating States were eager to produce a document that would reinforce security in Europe and nobody wanted to risk a failure of the agreement. So I think in retrospect the conference was bound to succeed. But it was not at all easy. The political systems were very different at the time and the systems of values were different.

There was maybe a tendency to take things – I wouldn’t necessarily say more seriously, but words mattered a lot at the time. Every sentence was analysed. This was a common exercise, but also a sort of duel between the two sides, about whose interests would prevail. It was also an ideological rivalry, and in some circles there was skepticism about the whole exercise. So capitals, the people at home, had to be convinced of the value of the whole process.

All of the elements of today's OSCE were included in one way or another in the Helsinki Final Act. Many operational provisions are not relevant anymore, but the basic principles are still valid and the basic values, like human rights, sovereign equality of states, are still very much a matter of legitimacy for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Also the military confidence- and security-building measures, although they were modest compared to today's, were actually a breakthrough, because for the first time the countries committed themselves to announcing military maneuvers in advance in order to prevent misunderstanding and reduce risk.

Of course, one of the most important things, without which the OSCE would not have evolved into the international organization it is today, was that an agreement was reached to continue the process. At the beginning of the conference, it was not guaranteed that all of the states would be ready to continue. Some were of the view that the Helsinki Final Act should be the end of the matter. But in fact, there was a decision to have a follow-up meeting – in Belgrade. Why was Belgrade chosen? Yugoslavia was a member of the neutral and non-aligned group and had not yet hosted an event (as had Switzerland and Finland). Also, it was very active in the non-aligned movement in the United Nations, and it had a strong connection with the Mediterranean at the time. So the Geneva negotiations of the Helsinki Final Act were a beginning, not an end, and I think this is extremely important. ■

After the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, Vladimir Bilandzic went on to participate in CSCE follow-up meetings and negotiations of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs). Today, he is National Special Advisor for CSBMs in the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

Read more:

*For a comprehensive account of the CSCE process by a participant from the former Yugoslavia, see *Problems of Security and Cooperation in Europe* by Ljubivoje Aćimović (Sijthoff & Noordhoff, 1981). First published in Serbo-Croatian under the title *Problemi bezbednosti i saradnje u Evropi*.*

This is the third in a series of articles on the Helsinki Final Act published in Security Community on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of this fundamental document of the OSCE. Previously: "Reviving the Helsinki Spirit" by Lamberto Zannier (Issue 1, 2015) and "Whither the Second Basket?" by Kurt P. Tudyka (Issue 2, 2015).



OSCE

Josip Broz Tito, President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Yugoslavia promoted the inclusion of a "world dimension" in the Helsinki Final Act. In his message to the delegates on 3 July 1973, Tito stated: "Security and co-operation in Europe cannot rest on lasting foundations as long as in the immediate neighbourhood of Europe, and especially in the Middle East, as well as in other parts of the world, the hotbeds of conflicts and their causes are not removed and unless the participating States observe in their relations with other countries the same principles they will adopt at the Conference as a basis for their mutual relations. The participating States, which constitute the most highly developed part of the world, should, likewise, make greater efforts in the future to reduce, in the general interest, as well as in their own interest, the gap between the developed and underdeveloped, between the rich and the poor countries, because this gap is a constant and dangerous source of instability and conflict in the world."

The OSCE in Ukraine

Update: July 2015 to January 2016

The OSCE is responding to the crisis in and around Ukraine on many fronts. This overview follows previous updates in Security Community, Issues 2/2014, 3/2014 and 1/2015.

Mediation and Negotiation

The Trilateral Contact Group, which meets in Minsk and is made up of representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the OSCE, represented by the Chairperson-in-Office's Special Representative Martin Sajdik, and its four working groups on political, security, humanitarian and economic issues continued efforts to resolve the crisis in and around Ukraine. The Trilateral Contact Group and representatives from the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Lugansk People's Republic" agreed to a renewed ceasefire in eastern Ukraine from 1 September; however, this has come under increasing pressure since November 2015.

On 29 September, the Security Working Group reached an agreement on an Addendum to the Minsk Package of Measures, foreseeing the withdrawal of tanks, artillery under 100 mm and mortars up to 120 mm in eastern Ukraine. (The Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements was agreed by the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine on 12 February 2015.)

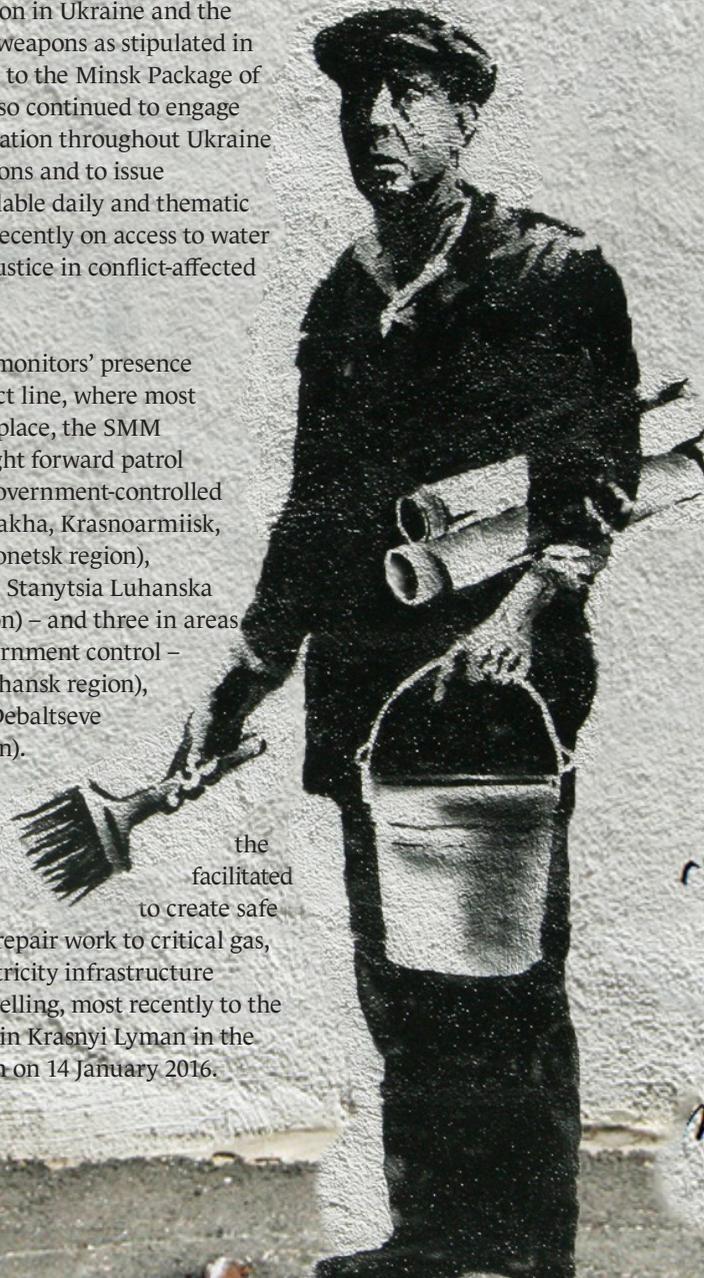
OSCE Chairpersons-in-Office German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (2016) and Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić (2015), OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier, as well as President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ilkka Kanerva, continued to use every opportunity to urge an end to the fighting and the fulfilment of obligations under the Minsk Agreements.

Monitoring

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) continued to monitor the security situation in Ukraine and the withdrawal of weapons as stipulated in the Addendum to the Minsk Package of Measures. It also continued to engage with the population throughout Ukraine to reduce tensions and to issue publically available daily and thematic reports (most recently on access to water and access to justice in conflict-affected areas).

To extend the monitors' presence near the contact line, where most incidents take place, the SMM established eight forward patrol bases, five in government-controlled areas – Volnovakha, Krasnoarmiisk, Svitlodarsk (Donetsk region), Novoaidar and Stanytsia Luhanska (Luhansk region) – and three in areas outside of government control – Stakhanov (Luhansk region), Horlivka and Debaltseve (Donetsk region).

Since spring 2015, the SMM facilitated local ceasefires to create safe conditions for repair work to critical gas, water and electricity infrastructure damaged by shelling, most recently to the water pipeline in Krasnyi Lyman in the Luhansk region on 14 January 2016.



The mandate of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk was extended to 30 April 2016. Observers continued to monitor cross-border movements at the two Russian checkpoints.

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) deployed an election observation mission to Ukraine to observe the local elections there on 25 October and 15 November 2015.

Rights and Freedoms

In its project activities, ODIHR has emphasized that peace and security are intrinsically linked with justice and co-operation, the advancement of democracy and human rights. In the second half of 2015, around 400 Ukrainian stakeholders benefited from training on human rights monitoring and hate crime, workshops on political party financing, meetings on women's political participation and seminars on parliamentary ethics. The Office also facilitated dialogue among religious or belief communities, civil society organizations and relevant state bodies in the Vinnitsa and Odessa regions and in Kyiv.

The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), Astrid Thors, visited western Ukraine in June and south-eastern Ukraine in November. Based on her findings, she put particular emphasis on the need to develop a stronger institutional framework for minority policy and to promote a balanced approach to issues of language and identity, including allowing multiple perspectives of history. In September, the HCNM published jointly with ODIHR the report on their human rights assessment mission on Crimea conducted in July, despite the fact that the HCNM's repeated calls for access to Crimea have not been accommodated.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, continues to closely monitor the situation regarding media freedom and safety of journalists in Ukraine, which remains worrisome. To build confidence and promote reconciliation, her office continues to host a series of roundtable discussions on journalists' safety with

representatives of Ukrainian and Russian journalists' unions. These efforts were broadened with the launch of a project for young journalists from the two countries to work together and jointly address the challenges faced by media members in the current political climate.

The OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Madina Jarbussynova, visited Ukraine to alert to the heightened risk of human trafficking during the crisis. In November, her office organized a training course on domestic violence in conflict situations and human trafficking in Dnipropetrovsk, which has seen a large influx of internally displaced persons. This follows on activities in April and May to mobilize efforts against modern slavery in crisis situations in Kyiv, Dnepropetrovsk and Kharkiv that included training sessions for the monitors.

Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

The OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU) continued to implement projects in direct and indirect response to the crisis. Under its multi-year project to facilitate a broad dialogue on the country's constitutional and societal reform process, it held discussion forums in Krasnoarmiysk on 30 July and Severodonetsk on 24 September.

Together with the OSCE Secretariat, the PCU launched a training project in July to assist state emergency personnel in clearing life-threatening explosive munitions left in eastern Ukraine as a result of hostilities. In four regions of the country, it provided equipment and training for the introduction of an information management system for mine action (IMSMA), most recently in Kharkiv oblast in December.

For judges working in administrative courts relocated from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the PCU, together with the Higher Administrative Court in Kramatorsk, organized a seminar on 3 December dealing with the application of case law of the European Court of Human Rights,

Economic Empowerment in Zhytomyr

All kinds of hats

“My name is Natalya. I grew up in the village of Troshchyn and moved to Zhytomyr to go to technical school. Now I’m a seamstress of hats.”

This self-introduction by the youngest of the women employed at the social sewing enterprise Barvysta, supported by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, could have ended on a much darker note had she gone through with the idea of getting a first job abroad.

The town of Zytomyr in north-western Ukraine is not an easy place to make a living. The Zytomyr region ranks among the lowest nationwide in terms of production, salaries and jobs (22nd out of 25 in a 2015 government survey of socio-economic development¹). It is famous for its sewing factories, yet only two per cent of qualified graduates find jobs. For those without practical experience, chances are almost nil. No wonder many look twice at the recruitment posters that hang on every lamppost for going to work abroad.

Poland is one of the most popular destinations, according to International Organization for Migration statistics. All of the seamstresses currently working at the sewing studio, Barvysta (the word means “colourful” in Ukrainian), previously at least toyed with the idea of finding employment there. Not that the prospect of leaving the country was really attractive, or that they were unaware of the dangers – deception, exploitation or even human trafficking. “Ukraine, after all, is dearer to us,” says Oksana, 29. But in one way or another, each had seen herself pushed to a limit and found it hard to see how she could stay.

For Oksana, things started not too badly. Right after high school, her mother managed to arrange work for her, sewing children’s T-shirts, aprons and uniforms. But a string of disappointing jobs later, she was broke, in bad health and disillusioned. The first job was paid by the piece. When the orders ran out, she left. At a second, in a shoe factory, the glue damaged her lungs. A third, sewing baby bedding, paid very poorly; the owner was not interested in developing the business. All three jobs were under the table. “Everyone works unofficially in Zhytomyr. In many factories, you are like a slave. They can give you an order, or not,” she says. To make matters worse, she found herself in a domestic situation where she was subject to violence at home. She thought of going to Poland. In fact she went so far as to visit the recruitment office in the shopping centre downtown. “They offered to arrange a steady job in a sewing factory – or maybe a cannery.” She might have gone, had she had the money to pay the fee required up front. But then she found an ad on the Internet for Barvysta. It offered not only employment but also accommodation in a safe shelter. She decided to stay.

Irina Babenko heads the Women’s Information and Consultation Centre (WICC) which runs Barvysta. She is acutely aware of the risks of working abroad. They are listed, from bad to worse, on the Centre’s website: indebtedness, illegal employment, confiscation of documents, isolation from the outside world, blackmail, mental or physical abuse. But from long years of experience – WICC has been helping women in distress since 2000 – she also knows that such warnings are often ineffective deterrents. Any risk pales in light of current reality for people who find themselves at an impasse. More effective can be a change to the here and now: even a small improvement to what seems like an unlivable situation can turn it into one where life can go on. That is the thinking behind Barvysta.

1. Survey by the Ministry of Regional Development of Ukraine published in October 2015.

Barvysta started from a few old sewing machines, which WICC had on hand, and an idea: if the equipment could be stocked up and modernized enough to permit professional production, it could be used to start a small commercial atelier. The business could offer employment to victims of trafficking or persons who might be at risk. At the same time, the revenues could be used to fund WICC's other anti-trafficking work.

The studio started operation in August 2015. It is still very small: there are five women employed so far. But for each, it has provided something crucial

for setting their lives back on track: a first official job without prior experience; re-training in new, competitive skills; a regular salary; respite from an abusive work environment. A senior seamstress assists the employees with the technique of sewing the shirts and blouses that are the atelier's first production line. "When we started sewing blouses, Aliona showed us everything calmly – no screaming, no throwing things. It's very unusual," says Inna, Oksana's friend from a previous job.

Svetlana comes from farther afield than her colleagues: she is an internally displaced person from Donetsk. For her, Barvysta has meant not having to pick up and leave once again. When the war broke out, her husband left and she found herself alone with two children. She sent them to live with her aunt in Zhytomyr. Her parents came, too, after her father narrowly escaped being killed by a bomb that exploded in their yard. She herself stayed behind, to look after the house and hold her job as long as she could. She worked for the railway as a process engineer, in a job she had held for 15 years. In January, she came to Zhytomyr to join her family – and start a new life.

Finding employment with the railway proved impossible: "I went to all the companies in the region, was tested, went to interviews, but could not find a position. There are reductions taking place; they are transforming the railway from a state enterprise to a joint stock company," she says. Six months later, feeling unable to impose on her aunt any longer, she, her parents and children had moved to a two-room flat. The children were going to school. She was still without a job. How to sustain them? What should she do? She thought of going to Kyiv. She thought of going to Poland, where relatives worked on poultry farms. In the end, her earlier training as a seamstress – during her studies she had worked for half a year in a sewing factory – helped her out. A priest, for whom she sewed some vestments, introduced her to WICC. And in August she joined Barvysta.

"What does Barvysta mean for me? First of all, it's a job. The salary is tiny compared with my previous earnings, but together with the social assistance I get for the children I can make ends meet. But Barvysta is more – the benefits are also psychological. All of us gathered here have interesting destinies, difficult paths. We all support each other, and this helps. As we improve our professional skills, as the sales process becomes more effective and our products are bought, I hope our salaries will increase, too. I think a lot of bright minds are working on this project, and I believe we can make it work," Svetlana explains.

Social enterprises are businesses and, as such, need to make money. But their real objective is not profit; it is making a difference in people's lives. This makes them complicated to manage, especially in Ukraine, where they are still uncommon and relevant laws and regulations are not in place.

That is where the OSCE comes in. The Project Coordinator in Ukraine (PCU) has expertise in economic empowerment, and can draw on the know-how of long-established social enterprises in other participating States that successfully provide employment for the disabled. At the same time, the team has years of experience in assisting the government and NGOs with preventing trafficking in human beings.



In 2014, the PCU launched a project to adapt the social enterprise model to assist persons at risk of trafficking. It is helping several Ukrainian anti-trafficking NGOs to realize their business ideas – Barvysta is one. At the same time, it is advocating for legislative reform in support of social enterprises that can help make their activities sustainable. Social enterprises are not meant to replace regular businesses. They are tools for social intervention. People take from them what they need and, strengthened, they move on. Sometimes, however, what someone needs most is not to be rushed into moving on.

Anna is the most recent arrival at Barvysta. But in fact, this is her second time at WICC. Disabled from birth, Anna's life story is a litany of abuse. She spent her childhood in public orphanages and shelters in Kyiv, dreaming of having a family. A woman who offered to fulfill that dream took her in, but sold her to a criminal ring. For a long time, stripped of her documents, she panhandled in the streets of Kyiv. On her own initiative, she contacted the International Organization for Migration, who sent her for rehabilitation to WICC in Zhytomyr. She stayed for four years, living in the shelter which WICC maintains and learning basic computer skills.

But in 2010, WICC's funding was cut, and it seemed the shelter might have to be closed. Anna moved out and stayed with friends, first in Zhytomyr, then Volodarsk-Volynsk, then Lugansk. In Lugansk she disappeared from the radar, for years. WICC lost touch with her in 2012. In November 2015, Babenko received a telephone call: "Irina Germanovna, save me." It came from Odessa.

Anna was found on Deribassovskaya Street, in the extreme cold, with hands and legs exposed. She had fallen into the hands of traffickers who forced her to beg on the street from morning to night. Somehow, she had managed to get a phone and use one of her rare toilet breaks to call. WICC mobilized contacts in Odessa, who whisked her away from the street and got her onto the last bus out. Now she is back at WICC, and part of Barvysta.

"She'll help us with our advertising, send out information about the company and our clothes. So there is work for her," Babenko explains. "But first she has to get better, after all she's been through."

Anna's story highlights an advantage of social enterprises over social programmes that depend on donor funding. They can provide the sustainability that is essential when people's wellbeing is at stake. The OSCE is paying particular attention to giving Barvysta and the other enterprises it is supporting all the training they need in building sound business plans for the long term.

The OSCE's support is budgeted for five years, but Barvysta is not a project with an end date. For the first time in her life, Anna, when asked how long she will stay, can answer, "maybe forever".

For Oksana and Inna, a month and a half was sufficient; now they have moved to another place of work. "It was time to try something new, and there may be others who need Barvysta more. They helped us to write our resumes – I didn't know how to do that before. And they call us to ask how we're doing," Oksana says.

Svetlana sees her future back in Donetsk. But no longer as a railway engineer. The work at Barvysta, more than an emergency measure, is becoming a chance to change her career. "I felt comfortable in the railway. But now, I like sewing. I want to develop in this area. Tailoring also interests me."

Natalya will continue to grow, as a seamstress of hats. She has already arranged to bring her patterns to Barvysta, and one day she will open her own studio. "I will make hats. Children's hats, women's, men's – all kinds of hats."

The project "Prevention of Human Trafficking in Ukraine through the Economic Empowerment of Vulnerable Persons" is implemented by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine with financial support from the governments of Canada and Norway. It aims to create new economic opportunities for victims of trafficking and vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons, as well as to strengthen NGOs' capacity to provide services to trafficked victims in a sustainable manner.

This article is based on information provided by Igor Sergeiev, National Project Officer, OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine. Note: The names of Barvysta employees have been changed to protect their privacy.

SECURITY COMMUNITY

THE OSCE MAGAZINE

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Interview with Frank-Walter Steinmeier Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE in 2016

At the OSCE Ministerial Council in Belgrade you mentioned that the OSCE is navigating turbulent waters. What leadership style can we expect from the skipper of the ship in 2016?

The 16th century Italian Jesuit priest Claudio Acquaviva once wrote “Fortiter in re, suaviter in modo” - vigorous in deed, gentle in manner. All participating States have committed themselves to a large set of principles, starting with the “Helsinki Final Act” and its “Decalogue”, and all States have reconfirmed their adherence to the OSCE principles many times since, in the Charter of Paris in 1990 and more recently in the Astana Commemorative Declaration. We will not compromise on this substance. At the same time, the “spirit of Helsinki” defines a clear method: persistent dialogue and a co-operative approach. During our OSCE Chairmanship, we will therefore put a focus on three areas: renewing dialogue, rebuilding trust and restoring security.

In the anniversary year of the Helsinki Final Act, fundamental principles of European security as set out in the OSCE’s founding document continue to be violated. What will be your strategy for setting this right?

The breach of OSCE principles and international law has to be called by its name, of course. At the same time, we have to try hard to overcome the spreading speechlessness in Europe. In these times of severe crisis we should, more than ever, hold firm to the path laid out by the CSCE process and engage in serious dialogue, rebuilding trust and rebuilding security. Anything else would only accentuate the fault lines we are currently seeing on the European continent.



In what formats could meaningful dialogue be restored in the OSCE?

Facilitating dialogue is one of the main purposes of the OSCE, particularly in stormy times. The variety of platforms the organization provides to that end is one of its main assets. The OSCE has developed proven fora in all its dimensions over the past decades: we will rely on these well-established dialogue formats.

We also plan a series of Chairmanship events, at both political and expert levels, throughout the year – steering a clear course towards the Ministerial Council in Hamburg. The location for this major annual meeting of the OSCE ministers is well chosen: no other German city symbolizes worldliness, tolerance and international connectedness quite like Hamburg.

Do you have proposals for how the OSCE could react more effectively to crises?

The crisis in and around Ukraine has shown that the OSCE can provide us with essential instruments for de-escalation in times of crisis, in particular as regards the rapid establishment and swift deployment of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine in the spring of 2014. Effective co-operation among OSCE participating States is possible, when and if the political will exists. What we have to work for is to ensure that the OSCE is ready to fulfil its mandate for security and accomplish its operational tasks. With this in mind, we should review some of the OSCE structures and processes, in particular with regard to early warning, conflict analysis, mediation and operational capacities. We will therefore aim to initiate a discussion process on OSCE capabilities in crisis response and management throughout all

stages of the conflict cycle – including a reflection on adequate funding. We should be aware that a lack of resources would curtail the OSCE’s efficiency in the field.

What steps should the OSCE take to reduce military risks?

We have to revitalize confidence- and security-building measures and co-operative arms control. They have helped us to reduce military risks in the past. With increased military activity in the OSCE area we need them more than ever. Unfortunately the instruments we have – namely those of the Vienna Document – have not been adapted to current challenges and military realities in quite a while. That is why working on this badly needed update is one of our priorities in 2016.

Adapted to the current situation, the Vienna Document can continue to play a valuable role in reducing military risks today. Via the obligatory information exchange and prior announcement or by ensuring the possibility for mutual observation, it can help to enhance transparency of armed forces and in particular of military activities. That way it can contribute to avoiding some of the great perils of the current security environment, namely dangerous misperceptions and unintended escalation.

You have chosen to focus on good governance in this year’s Economic and Environmental Forum. Why?

Good governance is a prerequisite for connectivity and closer economic exchange. It plays a key role when it comes to the fight against corruption, better investment conditions and challenges in environmental governance and labour migration. We will therefore highlight these aspects, both within the Economic and Environmental Forum and in a business conference in Berlin in May.

Many security challenges affecting our societies today, migration being a major one, stem from outside the OSCE area. How can the OSCE address these?

Indeed, our societies face a number of great challenges and threats with external root causes. This concerns migration, but also international terrorism, radicalization, drug trafficking and human trafficking.

Besides the numerous OSCE programmes and activities in the field, I consider the OSCE’s Partners for Co-operation to be key actors in tackling these problems jointly. The conference with the Mediterranean Partners in Jordan in October 2015 provided a very good starting point for engaging in deeper cross-regional dialogue and coordinating our efforts vis-à-vis the growing challenges.

How do you see the OSCE’s role in the fight against terrorism?

The appalling attacks we had to witness in the past months and years have clearly shown that bi- and multilateral co-operation as well as the exchange of best practices must be considerably boosted. I am convinced that the OSCE can facilitate such indispensable exchanges, both at the political and at the expert level. With a particular focus on the threat of jihadism, we are preparing a conference for 2016 that should focus on returning foreign fighters and the tremendous challenges linked to their reintegration in our societies.

Do we need a stronger – including financially stronger – OSCE today?

In the current challenging environment, the OSCE has proven its indispensable value as a forum for dialogue and as a recognized crisis manager, especially in Ukraine. In our view, these significant capabilities should be preserved and, where necessary, updated in order to make them fit for the future. In my view, this means this has to go along with providing for the necessary human and financial resources to fulfil the tasks assigned. More OSCE for less money is not a promising concept.

DEBATE

“The participating States once again recognized that the OSCE, with its comprehensive security concept encompassing the politico-military, environmental and economic, and the human dimensions of security, is uniquely placed to improve relations among participating States as well as to improve people’s lives, collectively and individually.”

– Ivica Dačić, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in 2015, Foreign Minister of Serbia, in his statement concluding the Ministerial Council, 4 December 2015

2015





**OSCE Ministerial Council 2015
Final Documents**

Decision on the Time and Place of the Next Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council

Ministerial Declaration on Reinforcing OSCE Efforts to Counter Terrorism in the Wake of Recent Terrorist Attacks

Ministerial Declaration on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism

Declaration on the OSCE Activities in Support of Global Efforts in Tackling the World Drug Problem

Declaration on Youth and Security

Ministerial Statement on the Negotiations on the Transnistrian Settlement Process in the "5+2" Format



Ministerial Council in Belgrade

Talking Nevertheless

Only one decision was taken at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade on 3 and 4 December 2015 – to meet again in Hamburg the next year. Documents that would have allowed the OSCE to move forward on issues like migration, gender, sustainable development, water management and preventing torture failed to reach the consensus that is required for all OSCE decisions.

However, the 2015 Ministerial Council was actively used to confer on difficult and pressing matters. Forty-two foreign ministers attended and availed themselves of the opportunity to conduct a multitude of bilateral and multilateral meetings. The Russian and Turkish foreign ministers met for the first time after the

downing of the Russian fighter jet near the Syrian-Turkish border. At an informal lunch hosted by the Chairperson-in-Office, heads of delegation brainstormed about ways to move forward on reconsolidating European security.

This Ministerial Council brought to the fore what many have been saying for years: the success of the meeting that culminates the work of the annually rotating Chairmanship each December should not be measured by the number of new documents that are adopted. The OSCE has a large corpus of decisions, commonly called commitments, which guide and will continue to guide the Organization's

work on a wide range of issues. Yes, it would have been helpful to receive fresh guidance on account of the many new developments. Equally, a more tangible outcome could have provided additional motivation to OSCE experts working in the different thematic fields and given impetus to the Organization's work. But there is already a lot of work to be done to support implementation of existing commitments without adding new ones.

The Ministerial Council, first and foremost, is about participating States coming together at a high political level to grapple with the serious security issues facing the region. That is why some participants came out of the 2015 OSCE Ministerial Council more optimistic than when they went in. Below is a sampling of expectations and reflections voiced during the meeting.



“The Organization faces difficult crisis – all of us know that – but the good message that we have heard during these two days here in Belgrade is that everybody realizes the importance of the OSCE and the importance of restarting the dialogue.

This is an important element, and we will see how we are able to develop that.

On the crisis in and around Ukraine, we

have heard particularly the idea of really sticking, all of us, to the Minsk Agreements, having them complied with by all the parties. So this is the positive side.

Another important element of the meeting has been that many delegations, almost all of them, have acknowledged that to face the many challenges affecting the region – they have been speaking about terrorism, but also about migration – we need unity among ourselves. If you put these elements together: the situation in Ukraine, the perspective that we have with the Minsk Agreements, and the great concern of everybody that we need to work together, then this is what, looking to the future, allows us to be a little more optimistic now than when we arrived here in Belgrade.”

– Ignazio Ybáñez, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Spain



“This Ministerial Council is taking place in a very complex environment, which, as you know, is marked by the terrorist phenomenon. In addition to this we have this huge flow of migration, of refugees, the ongoing crisis in and around Ukraine and, of course, the persistence of the protracted conflicts in the Black Sea area.

Our expectations briefly are the following: Romania, in its capacity as the chair of the OSCE Security Committee, has been doing its best to facilitate adopting a decision by this Ministerial Meeting on combating violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. We also hope the Ministerial Meeting will adopt a document on the OSCE's role in Ukraine, which should emphasize the importance of restoring respect for the fundamental principles of Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence.

Definitely we hope that this Ministerial Meeting would mark tangible progress towards the resolution of protracted conflicts, like the one in the Republic of Moldova, and we do hope that on this specific conflict a Ministerial Statement will be adopted on the negotiations in the Transdniestrian settlement process in the “5+2” format.”

– Lazăr Comănescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania

“This is a serious and complicated time, not only in Europe but everywhere in the world. This Ministerial Council is showing that the OSCE has value and credibility. It is the main organization for security dialogue in Europe. Mongolia is an OSCE participating State located in Asia. We believe that European and Asian security is indivisible. Today, the OSCE is not only a security organization for Europe, it is also a security organization for Eurasia, including Mongolia. It is very important to continue to address common security challenges among the Eurasian countries.

Therefore, we very much value the discussions taking place here, also the achievements. I am not referring only to final documents, but also to the contacts being made and the talks being held. Also in the future, the OSCE will be for us the main forum for international talks on security issues.”

– Lundeg Purevsuren, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia



Reinforcing efforts to counter terrorism

Two Declarations on countering terrorism were adopted at the Ministerial Council in Belgrade: Reinforcing OSCE Efforts to Counter Terrorism in the Wake of Recent Terrorist Attacks and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT). These Declarations underscore the commitment of participating States to remain united in combating terrorism and to take resolute action in this regard. Both Declarations reaffirm the UN's leading role in international efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism.

To reinforce the OSCE's efforts to counter terrorism participating States have agreed to continue to fully implement their commitments in this area, including those related to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, to preventing and suppressing terrorism financing and recruitment of members of terrorist groups, eliminating the supply of weapons to terrorists, as well as to comply with their obligations under international law. These include the UN Charter, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2170 condemning the abuse of human rights by extremist groups in Iraq and Syria, UNSCR 2178 on foreign terrorist fighters, UNSCR 2199 on the illicit financing of terrorist organizations, UNSCR 2249 on preventing and suppressing terrorist acts and other obligations under international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. Countering VERLT following a multi-dimensional approach is now a strengthened strategic focus area for OSCE counter-terrorism efforts. Participating States have recognized that the OSCE's comprehensive and co-operative approach to security provides comparative advantages in combating terrorism by identifying and addressing the conditions conducive to terrorism, including violent extremism, through all relevant OSCE instruments and structures. In particular, this consensus ensures a visible profile of the OSCE following the high-level discussion on countering violent extremism in the margins of the UN General Assembly and the expected adoption of a UN Action Plan on preventing violent extremism in 2016.

Tackling the World Drug Problem

The Ministerial Council Declaration on the OSCE Activities in Support of Global Efforts in Tackling the World Drug Problem underscores the OSCE participating States' broad consensus to continue working together in addressing threats to their security

and stability posed by illicit drugs. The Declaration reconfirms the OSCE Concept for Combating the Threat of Illicit Drugs and the Diversion of Chemical Precursors and sends an important political message on the OSCE's role in complementing the UN in preparation for the forthcoming UN General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem. It reaffirms the role of implementation of the three UN International Drug Control Conventions (1961, 1971 and 1988) and the willingness of participating States to achieve targets and goals set out in the UN Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted in Vienna in 2009.

In 2016 the OSCE executive structures will continue to facilitate strengthening further international co-operation to achieve the goals set out in these Declarations, as well as to provide necessary assistance to interested participating States.

Youth and Security

The members of the Ministerial Council took note of the efforts of the current and previous OSCE Chairmanships and stressed the importance of promoting the implementation of the OSCE commitments on youth, particularly in the area of education and the role young people can play to support participating States in implementing OSCE commitments.

For a New Start on Resolving the Transdniestrian Conflict

Talks to resolve the conflict between Moldova and the breakaway region Transdniestria were first held in the "5+2" format in 2005. The format includes the sides (Transdniestria and Moldova) as well as the OSCE, Russia and Ukraine as mediators and the European Union and the United States as observers. The OSCE chairs the negotiations.

Despite the best efforts of the Chairmanship and the Mission to Moldova, no "5+2" meeting could be organized in 2015. The Ministerial Statement on the Negotiations on the Transdniestrian Settlement Process in the "5+2" Format, however, marks a reconfirmation of the willingness to engage in further meaningful dialogue aimed at the ultimate resolution of the Transdniestrian conflict. As such, it provides a solid basis for the German Chairmanship and the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office, Cord Meier-Klodt, to continue these efforts in 2016.

A New Tradition: Chairmanship Self-Evaluation

The OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference that meets annually on the eve of the Ministerial Council to hold up a mirror to participating States' implementation of human dimension commitments has become a tradition. The first one was held in 2010 on the occasion of the OSCE Summit in Astana. Meeting again in Vilnius the following year, a core group of civil society organizations (CSOs) formed the Civic Solidarity Platform, which since has grown to 80 CSOs and conducts not only the annual meetings but also other events and campaigns throughout the year.

Unfortunately, this time round in Belgrade, the list of alarming trends was again long. Activists discussed the shrinking space for civil society, the challenges posed by migration, preventing torture and enforced disappearances, and freedom of expression – with OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović joining as a guest speaker. They presented their recommendations, including the “Belgrade Declaration: Freedom of Expression under Threat” to representatives of the OSCE Troika for consideration by the Ministerial Council.

Another tradition began in 2014 under the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship. In 2014, Switzerland was the first to act upon the Civic Solidarity Platform's proposal that the Chairmanship conduct a self-evaluation of its own performance in the area of human rights. Serbia agreed to follow suit when it took on the leadership of the Organization in 2015.

According to the methodology applied by Switzerland and followed by Serbia, the process of self-evaluation consists of three parts: reports by independent institutions, comments by CSOs and responses by the relevant ministries and government offices. At the Belgrade meeting, the coalition of Serbian CSOs responsible for monitoring Serbia's Chairmanship, led by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, presented its written comments, completing the second step of the process.

The Serbian Foreign Ministry used the same criterion as Switzerland for determining in which areas the self-evaluation was to be conducted: they should be topics on which OSCE reports had been published in the last five years. The Ministry chose gender equality, elections, freedom of assembly and the status of Roma. The CSO coalition added another three topics it deemed important: freedom of expression, the situation of national minorities and the protection of human rights defenders.

The assessments and recommendations to the Serbian government in the 131-page CSO report are detailed and many. To name just a few: changes in the election law to enable members of ethnic minorities to represent their interests and, in general, a comprehensive minority integration policy; a law on freedom of assembly (currently Serbia has none); new measures for social inclusion of Roma using the effective health mediation mechanism as a model; a media scene free from pressures on media owners, editors and journalists; and an environment in which human rights defenders can act without fear of reprisals. Responses from the relevant government ministries are to come.

The CSO coalition also commented on the self-evaluation process itself. It recommends not to limit topics to those covered by OSCE reports, as others may be more urgent. And it suggests completing the CSO feedback already at the start of a Chairmanship term, so that the year of the mandate can be used to implement recommendations and begin monitoring them.

Read more:

Outcome documents of the 2015 OSCE Parallel Civil Society Conference, including *Feedback by the CSO Coalition for the Monitoring of Serbia's OSCE Chairmanship*: www.helsinki.org.rs/hrights_t12.html

More information on the Civic Solidarity Platform: www.civicsolidarity.org



Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security
as a Common Project

Rebooting European Security

It was at the Ministerial Council in Basel in December 2014 that the then Chairperson-in-Office, Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter, in the name of the OSCE Troika, called into being the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project. A year later, the final report of the deliberations by the group of seasoned statespersons and experts from across the OSCE region, entitled “Back to Diplomacy”, attracted strong interest at the Ministerial Council hosted by the Serbian Chairmanship in Belgrade. Launched on the first day of the meeting, it was discussed at the traditional Ministerial luncheon and the subject of a special side event and press conference. Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger, who chaired the panel, summarized the main takeaways of the report:

“Every single panel member agreed that the current situation is actually the most serious and dangerous challenge to European security we have seen since the disintegration of the Soviet Union over the last 25 years. Our first, short-term recommendation is that we should try to make the situation as it stands less dangerous. We feel very strongly that measures to avoid misunderstanding, misinterpretation or accidental escalation need urgently to be concluded between all concerned parties. One particular aspect of this refers to updating the Vienna Document [the OSCE’s major document on military confidence- and security-building measures].

Secondly, we found in our discussions that the narratives which we have on the western side are so diametrically opposed to the narrative in Russia that these narratives in and of themselves aggravate the situation. They make rapprochement, they make trust building an even bigger challenge. This is why we set out in such detail in our report three different narratives.

Thirdly, any fundamental effort to reconsolidate European security needs to be built on the basis of more progress in the negotiations in Minsk to

resolve the crisis in and around Ukraine. Our report stresses the importance of this and we even suggest, as we move forward, an enlargement of the so-called Normandy format (which brings together Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany), to include, for example, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Finally, in the larger strategic dimension, we propose that a robust, long-term diplomatic process be started to bring the parties to the table again. We need to figure out a way to talk to each other again; we need to set in motion a diplomatic machine, based on the Helsinki principles – not intending to change or soften or weaken Helsinki but to strengthen and to reaffirm these principles. I will conclude by suggesting that if such a diplomatic process is set in motion, beginning hopefully with the German OSCE Chairmanship this coming year, we would like to consider this a long-term process, the ultimate aim of which should be a summit meeting. Such a summit, if it is to be successful, to lead to strengthening European security, needs careful preparation, bilateral consultations in small groups, confidential discussions. Sitting at a table together, working out diplomatic solutions based on Helsinki is better than fighting in Donbas. This is why I hope our report will make a difference. I hope it will be taken up, as the OSCE, as the countries involved, move forward.”

Read more:

Back to Diplomacy: Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project: www.osce.org/networks/205846

Lessons Learned for the OSCE from its Engagement in Ukraine: Interim Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project: www.osce.org/networks/164561

Reviving Co-operative Security in Europe through the OSCE: Contribution of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions to the Panel of Eminent Persons 2015: www.osce.org/networks/188176

“Rethinking the OSCE and Security in Europe” by Fred Tanner in *Security Community, Issue 1, 2015:* www.osce.org/magazine

More information at: www.osce.org/networks/pep

Interview with Adam Kobieracki

Accept Reality and Work with It

Adam Kobieracki was the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) from 2011 to 2015. He looks back on a long engagement with the OSCE, beginning in 1986, when he was a member of the Polish delegation to the CSCE Follow-up meeting in Vienna. As a Polish diplomat he played a leading role in the negotiation of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and the CFE adaptation talks. He joined the Polish Permanent Mission to the OSCE in Vienna in 1991 and led negotiations of security documents including Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crisis Situations, the Vienna Document 1994 and the OSCE Charter on European Security. He headed the Polish delegation from 1997 to 2000, chairing the Permanent Council during Poland's OSCE Chairmanship in 1998.

What changes did you witness during your term of office as Director of the Conflict Prevention Centre?

Four years ago the OSCE area was more stable, of course. Yes, there were protracted conflicts, there were tensions, but not comparable to what we have been facing since a year and a half ago in Ukraine. So our conflict prevention, operationally, has changed a little. Our main operational effort is *de facto* crisis management in Ukraine.

Otherwise, there has been an obvious, ongoing tendency towards changing the format of our field operations. Some have been closed, some transformed into project co-ordinator offices. The reasons vary. Participating States may have the perception that hosting a field presence carries with it a stigma, or they may be unhappy with political reporting, or with reporting in general.

We have to accept this as a fact of life. It simply means both a challenge and an opportunity for the OSCE to reinvent our involvement in the field. Perhaps we would need smaller offices, some kind of Secretariat outposts; perhaps we would need sub-regional or regional presences. That remains to be seen. But I think the change will probably happen, not as the implementation of a pre-negotiated concept, but rather as circumstances dictate. Currently we are working on the establishment of a small presence in Minsk, to support the Trilateral Contact Group [the negotiation body for resolving the conflict in and around Ukraine, comprising Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE]. This is not

something that could have been negotiated as a concept. It is a reaction to a requirement of the day. And I think this is what will happen with our other field presences.

By no means am I saying that they are not needed. We need some kind of presence in the field. We need to have eyes and ears on the ground. We need our colleagues to have a really good understanding of problems that may lead to tensions or crises throughout the OSCE area. If what we have now is not acceptable to some of our participating States – OK, we have to accept the reality and work with them. In a few cases, we might be able to change a little the way our missions are functioning. Or we could invent something new, without compromising on core principles, standards and norms, the three dimensions of security. These should be untouchable. How we implement our commitments, how we work – that's a different thing.

What new kind of field office might work well in your opinion?

There are different scenarios possible. As far as having access to people on the ground is concerned, experts working in project co-ordination offices can maintain contacts with different organizations, institutions and networks just as well as members of conventional field missions can. The difference is political reporting. This reporting function would have to be somehow developed. It could be conducted through the reporting on the implementation of projects. That is one possibility.

The other might be to have mobile teams, visiting teams. Our open-ended working group on the conflict cycle is continuing its work and is focusing not only on mediation but also on different forms of conflict prevention, crisis management and crisis resolution. One of them is early warning: early warning is very close to political reporting.

There is a need to take a look and to develop new instruments. It is impossible for me to predict how exactly they would look. There are too many things that make the picture really complicated. The current security situation, to put it mildly, is a bit unstable. There is the implementation record, as far as norms and standards and principles are concerned. There is an ongoing dispute among participating States about who is implementing, who respects our norms and who does not. There is absolutely no trust or confidence among our participating States. I have no idea in which direction things will go, whether we will end up negotiating a new security framework for Europe or rather develop the OSCE in the direction of a more flexible organization. I have no idea, as far as the Ukrainian crisis is concerned, whether the dust will settle next year or whether it will take longer. There will be important political developments next year, starting with the NATO summit, which will contribute to the overall security perception in the OSCE area. There are too many things in the making. So the only thing I can say is, yes, the OSCE is once more in the situation that it will have to look critically at what it has in terms of instruments, ways and means of action, mechanisms and so on, and then see what can be done.

You said there is no trust between our participating States. In the year of Helsinki +40, is that not a devastating remark?

Yes it is, but it is true. The Helsinki +40 commemorative event in Helsinki in July was not a meeting to express joy and happiness. For me, it was first and foremost a meeting to remind everybody that the Helsinki principles are still valid and should be observed, respected and implemented. That is how we marked the 40th anniversary. I am not saying there is absolutely no trust. But to be very frank, if I compare the discussions at Permanent Council meetings when I came four years ago to what has been going on in the Hofburg during the past year, these are like discussions on two different planets. It is still the same format, the same conference room,

but the statements, the political level of discussions, the kinds of accusations are unbelievable compared to what was the case four years ago. We are in the midst of one of the most serious political security crises in the OSCE area after the Cold War.

What is the place for OSCE strategies like reconciliation in such a situation, when principles are being blatantly violated?

First of all, we need time and patience. The time for reconciliation and mediation will come. Historically, it needs time. In the case of Poland, it took us 20 years after the end of the Cold War before we started real reconciliation between the Russian Federation and Poland, in the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Matters. Professors Adam Rotfeld and Anatoly Torkunov did an excellent job and achieved impressive results. But it took 20 years to start the process and now once more for obvious political reasons it seems to be gone with the wind. We can hardly expect people now in Ukraine to be in the mood for reconciliation. The first thing is: they need to accept reality. When I say “accept reality”, I do not mean accepting that there was an aggression, or however you would like to call it. You have to accept where you are. And then, what do you want to do? Do you want to share with everybody else your unhappiness? OK, your call. Do you want others to help you reestablish yourself? Your call, but then, things are a bit different. At the same time, Moscow has to accept responsibility for its actions in the context of this crisis.

Regarding the bigger vision, building an OSCE security community, I would like to remind you of the dictum: “der Weg ist das Ziel” - the journey is the goal. With political processes, it's not so much the outcome, the document that will be signed, that matters. It's the fact that people sit and talk, try to explain things to one another. We should not be frustrated by the fact that we are not in a position to sign a new pan-European security treaty in one, two or even five years' time. The way the Ukrainian crisis is being discussed is disruptive politically, but still, it is a good thing that we are having these meetings, that there is this discussion. It will take time, but at least there is a channel of exchange – even if it is only exchange of accusations, although we should gradually move in another direction. It is the process that is important, not just the outcome.

You say that it is important for the process to keep going. But doesn't there seem to be a tendency away from multilateralism, back to the idea of just a small group of states deciding about the resolution of conflicts?

To answer this question I will have to become a bit philosophical. What is the OSCE? First of all it is a certain set of values, norms and principles. I don't mean documents; I mean a certain axiology. When you say, "OSCE", you should be able to say "what I mean is also a certain attitude, certain values, not just deriving from documents."

What else is the OSCE? It is a collection of instruments or mechanisms, which the participating States may use or may not use. What's going on now also shows in what kind of mood our participating States are. They are using existing channels of communication for very tough discussions.

At the same time, and this, if you will, is the third level of the OSCE, it is we, the people, the officials, bureaucrats and experts who are working for the Organization. But what can we do? We can only do what the collective will of the participating States is prepared to accept and would like us to do.

At this stage, participating States are simply not in the mood – and there are some reasons for that – to use some of the instruments that we keep available for them: mediation, reconciliation, confidence building measures, a variety of possible missions and modes of reporting. This is all available. We are the guardians of the instruments and the mechanisms, but we cannot impose them.

Our duty is to make sure that those instruments that are not being used now – like reconciliation, like mediation, like the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration in Geneva, which in fact has never been used – are functional, in the hope and the understanding that the time will come when the dust will settle a little and they can be used.

How do we make sure in the OSCE that when we focus so much on Ukraine now that we

don't neglect other places where there are protracted conflicts or where there may not be conflicts now but something could happen in two or three years?

You almost answered your own question. If we forget about other crises, they will remind us, and it will happen soon. It is inevitable that we focus on Ukraine, given the nature of this crisis and given the scale of our involvement. At the same time, it is up to the Chairmanship to make sure that there is a political message: "while we are focusing operationally on Ukraine, we are not forgetting about other things."

We also have to accept a certain political reality, whether we like it or not – and I may be politically incorrect here: there are obvious implications of, let's call it, to be politically correct, the "the crisis in and around Ukraine", for other conflict areas. Settlement in Transnistria is unthinkable without clarity on the future of Donbas. Given the states involved in this crisis, we can hardly expect any progress in the South Caucasus now. There are political, strategic, even geo-political implications. So we will not be able to forget about other conflicts, and yes, in a sense, while changing gears, we have to make sure that we are not in neutral position, that we still can drive, even if we need to go more slowly than we used to.

How do you define the task of conflict prevention?

The entire OSCE is about conflict prevention. Even our fundamental documents – starting with the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter for Europe, this is all conflict prevention: rules, norms and standards agreed to make it easier for participating States to co-operate, with a view to preventing conflicts.

The Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) is just a part of it; it is one specialized structure within the OSCE dealing with certain conceptual and operational elements of this core mission. Other departments in the Secretariat, the Transnational Threats Department, for instance, are also doing conflict prevention, but in some well-defined, specific areas, like police and borders.

Nowadays, conflict prevention is understood in the broader context of the entire conflict cycle – not just prevention as such, but also early warning, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Do you have a vision for the future of the Conflict Prevention Centre?

My personal view is that there are two best-case scenarios, not just for the CPC as a structure but for conflict prevention as the OSCE's core mission. One possibility is to unify conflict prevention in the Secretariat – because some people may say that the current structure is fragmented. Actually, whether or not structures work depends on us, the people. I have never had problems with colleagues from the Transnational Threats Department working on borders and police, for instance. If we have good relations and do not hide things from one another, then what does it matter if we sit side by side in the same corridor or on different floors? I am not structurally minded.

The other possibility – and this is my personal dream – is that the Conflict Prevention Centre, in order to be able to do really effective and efficient conflict prevention, early warning, crisis management and conflict resolution, should become an independent institution, like the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) or the High Commissioner on National Minorities. Why? Here, in the Secretariat, the entire conflict prevention mission is very close to the consensus rule and to the stormy political waters of every Permanent Council meeting. If the CPC were like ODIHR, bound, of course, by certain provisions, rules, mandates, and so on, but then acting operationally, on its own, within these limits, maybe we would have had 2,000 monitors by now, and 1,000 unmanned aerial vehicles flying in Ukraine. I'm not talking about acting against the will of the participating States, just further away from political stormy waters, and further away from some tendencies for micromanagement.

This idea is not directed against the Secretariat. Personally, I see the OSCE as having two basic missions. One is conflict prevention; the other is helping participating States to conduct a security dialogue. What's wrong with having the CPC as an independent institution and the Secretariat serving

the security dialogue function, helping participating States to negotiate agreements on the issues that are of concern to them?

This new CPC – if anybody would ever consider that – would be more a conflict cycle institution, a crisis management institution. It could comprise the current CPC, the Transnational Threats Department and a few other current structures. One could add all the checks and balances required so that participating States could be assured that there would be no actions undertaken against their will.

It may sound like science fiction, and it is something that participating States would never agree to during a stable time. If there is a possibility of considering something like this, then only in times of deep crisis, when one is emerging from the crisis and looking for innovative solutions. You need stormy waters to think about something like this. So the time is now [laughs].

What are your best and worst memories of the past four years?

My best memory is the people. I have been extremely lucky to have the kind of staff with whom I've been working. Not only are they dedicated professionals, but basically, all they needed was a bit of guidance, a sense of direction, and trust from the management – I have never done any kind of micromanagement. But it's not just the staff of the CPC. It's also friends from other parts of the Secretariat, from Conference Services – I know those people from the 1990s, also from delegations. Probably, the biggest group of friends I have ever had on this earth is in Vienna. I spent altogether 17 years of my life here – and I still don't speak German, quite an achievement. So this is the best memory.

My worst? To be very frank, my worst memory is also of people, but people of a different kind. Sadly, not just in the OSCE, not just in Vienna, you can still meet people who, whenever you ask them about anything – a problem, an issue – they will start saying, “well, this is a very important issue, which has so many implications for another aspect of the problem, and I would encourage you to look at this in its entirety.” Sorry – you still meet people like that. When I do, I kind of keep quiet – I really have to control myself. ■

Aarhus Centres in South-Eastern Europe

A Regional Network

If you look at the waterways, there is hardly a region more interconnected than South-Eastern Europe. Ninety per cent of its territory is part of a transboundary river basin. Thirteen mighty rivers run their course through two countries or more: the Sava river basin connects four, the Drin five; the Danube's basin far exceeds the bound of South-Eastern Europe, extending over nineteen countries. It makes sense, therefore, for environmentalists in the region to join forces. That is what the OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres in South-Eastern Europe have done.

The cyclone that swept South-Eastern Europe in the spring of 2014 provided the wake-up call. In the aftermath of the flooding and landslides that caused scores of deaths, hundreds of thousands of displaced persons and billions of dollars of damage, the importance of co-ordination across borders for early warning, rescue and recovery became clear. Last March, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and the OSCE Presence in Albania invited 40 South-Eastern European government authorities and international experts to Tirana to reflect on different approaches for public participation in the management of

transboundary water resources. Each of the Aarhus Centres from the region was represented.

As of January 2016, there are 14 Aarhus Centres in South-Eastern Europe, in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. They are dedicated to the implementation of the Aarhus Convention, to which each of these states is a party. The Aarhus Convention establishes the right of all people to participate fully in environmental decisions affecting their lives. The Aarhus Centres help them to exercise that right by providing information, organizing public hearings, facilitating dialogue on pressing environmental issues. They also provide basic legal advice to citizens, citizen groups and civil society organizations on access to justice in case their right to information and public participation has been violated.

“What does the network mean in practice? First and foremost, it strengthens avenues of communication.”



Flooding in the Novosela commune near Vlore, Albania, January 2016 (Photo: Robert Murataj)

Matters of concern might be local, like pollution from a garbage dump, or national, like a new draft law on environmental protection. Or, as in the case of transboundary waterways, they may transcend state boundaries.

Regional questions dominated the discussions of the Aarhus Centre representatives when they met in Tirana. But they also shared reflections on challenges of their day to day work. It became clear that they could benefit from working together more closely. In June, in Vienna, at the meeting of Aarhus Centres organized annually by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities that brought together over 100 Aarhus Convention

stakeholders from the OSCE region, the South-Eastern European Aarhus Centres signed a Joint Declaration formalizing their co-operation. The regional network of South-Eastern European Aarhus Centres was born.

Communication first

What does the network mean in practice? First and foremost, it strengthens avenues of communication. Each Aarhus Centre works in its own local context, but all serve the same aim and face similar challenges. Touching base with colleagues can help. “We are in contact all the time, by Facebook or phone. Each Aarhus Centre can offer its own expertise in a different field. I, for example, am a lawyer, someone else may be an environmentalist or a biologist,” says Robert Murataj,

manager of the Aarhus Centre in Vlore, Albania. Darija Šajin, in Novi Sad, Serbia, has used her childhood education expertise to develop an interactive environmental awareness programme targeting pupils called Smart Schools, which she has shared with the network.

“The main focus of co-operation among the Aarhus Centres is transboundary challenges: water governance and disaster risk reduction.”

Even dissimilarities can help put one’s own work in perspective. Viktor Bjelić, who manages the Aarhus Centre in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, explains how he compares notes with colleagues in Serbia: “Whereas in Serbia the Aarhus Centres are located mainly in urban areas, the communities we serve are both urban and rural. In urban areas, disaster risk reduction concerns mostly floods and earthquakes. In rural areas, there are also landslides and forest fires. And there are problems with illegal agricultural practices, burning of agricultural waste, for instance. So the approach needs to be different. We organize lectures on how to use agricultural waste as fertilizer. In urban areas, people have access to information through the Internet. In rural areas, this is not the case. They need to be informed by means of printed information. Also, in rural areas, community solidarity is stronger and people are better connected.”

Shared challenges

The main focus of co-operation among the Aarhus Centres is transboundary challenges: water governance and disaster risk reduction. Each has worked in its respective community in the aftermath of the 2014 floods to improve early warning and rapid response.

In Novi Sad, Šajin and her colleagues created a broad network of stakeholders for co-ordinating action in the event of future disaster. “We believe we have started a dialogue that will make the community stronger and safer,” she says. The Banja Luka team conferred with them to identify who should participate. “They accepted our suggestion to include health care and animal welfare agencies, as well as insurance and agricultural companies,” Bjelić says. For its part, the Aarhus Centre in Banja Luka took a different approach, analysing the legal framework and creating a manual that gives municipalities the tools they need for developing their own risk reduction plans.

In Albania, winter floods are a frequent occurrence. Last year, 2,000 hectares were flooded near Vlore and thousands of farmers had to be evacuated. “We asked the local government to prohibit building in areas of risk and to collect the telephone numbers of all residents, so they can be warned in advance”, Murataj says.

In December, the network of South-Eastern European Aarhus Centres and municipalities convened in two separate groups for a three and a half-days of training and exchange on disaster risk reduction. Those from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina met in Sarajevo, those from Albania and Montenegro in Budva, Montenegro. National experts and a trainer from Switzerland provided detailed advice on hazard mapping and risk assessment practices.

The participants found the field visits and hands-on work organized as part of the training extremely useful. Such training sessions go a long way towards developing contacts and partnerships between local governments and Aarhus Centres to the benefit of increased community participation in local disaster risk reduction plans.

“Aarhus Centres are all about nature and people, but their task is highly political.”

Aarhus Centres are all about nature and people, but their task is highly political. They need to win the trust of authorities so that they can liaise with them effectively on the part of the public. A highlight of the week of training was that municipal representatives were also present and engaged in cross-border exchange. “It was a good occasion to gain their confidence so that we can work towards a partnership for the benefit of our local communities,” Šajin comments. “Municipalities recognize the Aarhus Centres as reference points for educating the community. We are staying in touch with participants of the training course in Budva, to continue sharing ideas,” Murataj says.

Aarhus Centres were first initiated by the OSCE in 2002, and now number 60 in 14 countries, in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Another example of cross-border co-operation in the Aarhus Centres Network is between the Aarhus Centres in Osh, Kyrgyzstan and Khujand, Tajikistan, in Central Asia’s fertile Ferghana Valley. They formalized their relationship in a Memorandum of Understanding in 2014. The two Aarhus Centres share the Soviet legacy of uranium tailing dumps, which pose a serious environmental, security and health hazard, and implement joint activities in raising awareness of the risks related to uranium sites and natural disasters.

Both in South-Eastern Europe and in Central Asia, stronger cross-border Aarhus Centre co-operation could contribute to enhanced political co-operation in the future. “All of us in the Balkans are aiming to be part of the European Union family,” says Murataj in Albania. “We need to have more workshops like the one in Budva. They enable us to identify issues of common concern and discuss ways to address them jointly. Co-operation between civil society organizations working for good governance and the environment is a necessity,” he concludes.

Read more:

Safeguarding the environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Aarhus-style:

osce.org/bih/217156

The Aarhus Centres: a Brief Introduction:

osce.org/secretariat/89067

Websites of Aarhus Centres across the OSCE region: osce.org/secretariat/160246

More information:

osce.org/Aarhus



An Afghan girl wears her headscarf before leaving her home in Kabul, Afghanistan, 2009. © Farzana Wahidy

The photojournalist Farzana Wahidy was born in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and in 1984 she moved to Kabul at the age of six. She attended school during the years of the Afghan civil war, and after the Taliban came to power and prohibited the education of women she secretly attended an underground school – located in an apartment – with 300 other girls. When the Taliban was defeated Farzana continued her education, completing high

school, then enrolling in a two-year program sponsored by AINA Photojournalism Institute.

In 2004 Farzana began working as a photojournalist for Agence-France Presse, becoming the first female Afghan photojournalist to work for an international wire service. Farzanas photographs have been presented in solo and group exhibitions throughout the world.

www.farzanawahidy.com



Afghanistan's Women Keeping the Peace

In today's Afghanistan, women are playing an ever greater role in the task of building the country's security. This is part of the new Afghanistan, but there is continuity, too. Already a hundred years ago, the Afghan constitution guaranteed women a place in public life. Two prominent Afghan women, Shukria Barakzai, who took part in drafting the new constitution in 2003 and chaired the parliamentary defence committee under the previous government, and Hasina Safi, who directs the Afghan Women's Network, talk about milestones and challenges in defending that right.

“They’re doing a wonderful job”

Shukria Barakzai



Is there a history of women working for security in Afghanistan?

Throughout the ages, Afghanistan has known strong and powerful women: Razia Sultan ruled in the 13th century, the empress Goharshad Begum in the 14th. In 1880, the heroine Malalai rallied Afghan forces to fight for freedom from British rule, leading to victory in the Battle of Maiwand. That is a part of our history no one can deny.

A hundred years ago, when our first constitution was being developed, five women took part in the drafting. There were female elected members of parliament from the time it started to function. We had women working in industry. Education was very important; many would go abroad to study, for instance to Turkey. Then, suddenly, everything changed. After the Soviet occupation, the ideas of Islamists and mujahidin came to the fore. The culture of violence replaced the culture of peace. Our country went through difficult times.

The presence of the international community from late 2001 brought a ray of sunlight, new hope. At the International Conference on Afghanistan in Bonn, it was agreed to name two women to the cabinet of the new government, to the posts of Vice-chair of Woman's Affairs and Minister of Public Health. The constitution, which we adopted in 2003, ensures fundamental rights for men and for women and includes provisions for positive discrimination in favour of women. It reserves a minimum of 25 per cent of seats in the parliament for women candidates. It ensures women's participation in different sectors, including the security sector. Article 55 clearly states that Afghan citizens, men and women, are responsible for the security of the country.

What was your experience as a woman chairing Afghanistan's parliamentary defense committee?

The defense committee is one of the most important committees, second only to foreign relations. It has a direct connection to the work of the Afghan National Security Force. When I chose to go to the defense committee after five years working in human rights, civil society and women's affairs, the idea was a nightmare for me. But I knew that United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women peace and security would never become reality if women were not engaged in the security sector and the peace process. So therefore I decided to be there, to ensure that women's issues would be considered.

How did I manage my role as chairwoman? In a one-year period, we had two four-and-a-half-month terms. In the first, I sat in the committee and asked the entire security institution to come and brief us. We were the ones taking notes: about what they were doing, about their strategy, their national conferences and about the transition – because in that year the transition started, the transfer of the responsibility for security from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the Afghan National Security Force. We tried to increase their numbers; we tried to support them; we tried to fight corruption.

In the second part of the year, I travelled to the military bases, which is very, very unusual. For most of the men, it was the first time they were saluting a women in a military base. In fact, it was the first time a government official was coming and seeing how they were doing. I tried to be deeply engaged, starting with their working conditions. Were they eating? Were they sleeping? What medical supplies were they getting? Were they receiving their salaries? How were they fighting? How were they organizing themselves? Where was their air

support? Where was their ground support? It was like a college education for me – not only for me, for them, too.

Sleeping on the military bases, spending time there, going to the areas where fighting was ongoing, travelling in military helicopters with open doors and gunmen, all of this was very new for me and I was always thinking to myself: “yes, it’s really me. I’ve always been against these guns and look at me now.”

How were you able to support women in the security sector?

It was an ongoing process. I went to see women who were working in the Afghan National Security Force and in the police force as well. I checked with them about their salaries and they told me about their situation, including about cases of sexual abuse. I remember once, at a conference, advising the Minister of the Interior, “if any man acts disrespectfully towards a policewoman, you need to punish him in front of everybody; it should be a lesson for the others to stop.” Unfortunately, abuse is a reality, it’s happening, whether we like it or not.

As a rule, women and men are supposed to receive equal salaries, but we decided that women in the security sector should get a higher salary, so that they do not have to work as many nightshifts and can stay with their children. We also worked on providing kindergartens and collective housing for policewomen. Unfortunately, in our culture, it is still unpleasant for kids to have mothers in uniform: neighbours tease them because of their mother wearing men’s clothes and such things.

We need to work on changing this attitude, on cultivating the image of women in the security sector as a role model. We already have women who are military pilots. They’re working with the Afghan National Security Force. Not only as officers. They’re going for special operations, also for night operations, which are very important. They’re abseiling from helicopters, like in Hollywood movies. They’re well trained and they’re doing a wonderful job. ■

“Women are essential to nation-building”

Hasina Safi



How has the Afghan Women’s Network (AWN), which you direct, helped women to participate in the reconciliation process in Afghanistan?

The AWN has been involved in peace-making efforts since its establishment. In fact, we started it back in 1995 because of the conflict situation and the more complicated situation of women in Afghanistan at that time.

Women have an important role to play. Considering that the family is the foundation of a society, and the energy of women a mobilizing force within the family, it is clear that women are essential, not only to the process of reconciliation, but also to stability and nation-building.

Our first success in the fight for involvement in the peace process was in 2010, at the first Peace Jirga, a national consultation on bringing peace to Afghanistan. It was the first national Jirga in which women were allowed to be part of the reconciliation process, as is our right set out in the national constitution. Four women were invited to take part. When we saw that only four were invited, we took the matter to the president, referring to our constitution and to United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security. After a lot of advocacy, we managed to get the number of women up to 240 out of more than 1600 delegates.

Since the establishment of the Afghanistan High Peace Council under the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme, we have been working with women who are members of the Provincial Peace Councils. We were working in Kabul, but realized that women in the provinces lacked opportunities. So we

started capacity-building programmes for them. At the beginning they were hesitant and lacked confidence. But today, some go out and talk to women and their families and even to members of armed groups. They are women who can reason. They are demonstrating their capability and showing that they are active members of the reconciliation process.

How important is UNSCR 1325 for Afghanistan?

It is a decade and a half since the UN Security Council adopted UNSCR 1325. Ten years ago, its meaning was not very clear to top decision makers in Afghanistan. It was just a number. But gradually, with more awareness-raising, co-ordinated by different UN member states and relevant partners, it has been recognized as an important document aimed at involving women in conflict zones in the peace and reconciliation process.

In June of this year, Afghanistan launched its National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325. We worked for two years on its development. I sat in the advisory committee and the AWN was also represented in the technical committee. In addition, we worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to define what UNSCR 1325 means for women in Afghanistan: what they want from the peace; what challenges they are facing. We organized consultations with women at the grass-roots level all over Afghanistan and provided the Ministry with ideas and recommendations for the National Action Plan on behalf of civil society.

We have been preparing annual shadow reports similar to the reports submitted by countries that have already ratified UNSCR 1325. The reports are based on the four pillars of UNSCR 1325: prevention, protection, participation and relief and recovery. They monitor what is happening on the ground – for example, how women have been promoted – and match this against the resolution’s implementation indicators.

Can you describe your efforts to bring more female politicians into government and the security sector?

As I mentioned above, our constitution has several articles supporting the participation of women in public life. At first, we focused our efforts on having women included in decision-making. Today we are fighting for an increase in numbers. Currently, 68 women are represented in the parliament. We have been advocating for women in the cabinet as well, demanding the inclusion of at least eight women. It has not happened yet; currently we have four.

There are women in the security forces, but we have to think in terms of quality opportunities. Women in the security sector face a lot of challenges. Many of them are widows, and it is they who provide for their families. When problems arise in the workplace, they sometimes keep silent for fear of losing their job. Opportunities are not given equally to men and women, regarding salaries or privileges, for instance. There are cases where male officers are provided with a vehicle and bodyguard, while female officers might not even get money to cover their transport costs. The widows among them need someone to look after their children. Are they provided with facilities like kindergartens? Usually not. We also hear that in some conservative areas, people refuse to rent their houses to female police officers, saying that they are not “good women”. These are some of the difficulties women still face.

Saule Mukhametrakhimova, Media Officer in the Communication and Media Relations Section, OSCE Secretariat, spoke with Hasina Safi.

UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 is the first of eight resolutions on women, peace and security. The resolution recognizes that women and men have different experiences of conflict and war and that both need to be taken into account in order to reach sustainable peace and stability. The resolution calls for the inclusion of women in four areas: participation of women in peace processes, protection of women in war and peace, prevention of conflicts and prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence and the inclusion of women in post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

The OSCE, Gender Equality and Afghanistan

The OSCE recognizes gender equality as essential to fostering peace, sustaining democracy and driving economic development. Building on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, it has developed its own policy framework to ensure that its comprehensive security efforts are inclusive of both men and women. Afghanistan has been an OSCE Partner for Co-operation since 2003. Here are some ways the OSCE and Afghanistan have worked together to bring the perspective of women to bear on security-related activities.

Peacebuilding

The OSCE Secretariat's Gender Section promotes women's leadership in peacebuilding. To raise international awareness of how critical women's empowerment is for security and reconciliation in Afghanistan, the OSCE Secretariat's Gender Section, together with the Embassy of Afghanistan, organized a visit by the Afghan Minister for Women's Affairs, Dilbar Nazari, to the OSCE headquarters in Vienna in May 2015. She was accompanied by a delegation of representatives from other government and civil society institutions, including the Director of the Afghan Women's Network, Hasina Safi – see page 37.

Border Management

The OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, encourages the participation of women in its border security training, which includes gender mainstreaming as part of its core curriculum. The first Afghan women joined the BMSC in 2013; 11 have attended so far. The BMSC also offers courses exclusively for women: a short course for female leaders of border security and management agencies and an all-women staff course, covering topics ranging from management models to information sharing, migration, human trafficking and smuggling, counter-terrorism, anti-corruption measures, conflict management, and leadership.

Customs

The OSCE Centre in Bishkek has conducted specialized training for customs officers from Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. One of the achievements of the courses was the participation of seven female Afghan officers. The Centre is determined to encourage more female officers from

Afghanistan to take advantage of its train-the-trainer courses so they can share what they have learned during the training with their peers back home.

Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment of women is an important contributing factor to security and prosperity. The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities organized a programme for women entrepreneurs from Afghanistan to strengthen their business management skills, improve their professional networks and broaden their market opportunities. They joined counterparts from Tajikistan and Azerbaijan for a one-week training course in Istanbul in 2012. (See story in The OSCE Magazine, Issue 4, 2012.)

Education

The OSCE Academy in Bishkek is a regional centre of post-graduate education and research which runs two MA programmes, in politics and security and in economic governance and development. Students come from across Central Asia and other countries, including students from Afghanistan since 2008. The OSCE Academy in Bishkek has six female graduates from Afghanistan and one current student. The Alumna of the Year in 2015 was a graduate from Afghanistan, Sakina Qasemi. She is now dean of the economics and management faculty at the Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education (GIHE) in Kabul.



A New Generation of Afghan Artists The Kabul Art Project

Afghanistan's art scene has seen a revival since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Today, many young artists are reflecting on what has happened in Afghanistan during the past decades and what challenges the country faces today. But they still contend with widespread mistrust of artistic expression, especially when practiced by women.

“Public exhibitions of critical artworks are mostly restricted to foreign institutions such as the Institut Français or the Goethe Institut,” says Christina Hallmann, an illustrator and graphic designer from Cologne, Germany. Two years ago, she started the Kabul Art Project to support 11 artists from Kabul. It's an Internet platform that allows them to connect with media, art collectors, galleries and art lovers. The group also holds exhibitions, most recently in Penticton, Canada in autumn 2015. “It was the biggest exhibition of contemporary Afghan art that has ever been on display outside Afghanistan,” Hallmann says.

Meanwhile, 26 artists have joined the Kabul Art Project. Three of them, a man and two women, tell about their passions and concerns.

Concept, research and interviews by Natalia Gurova, Intern in the Communication and Media Relations Section of the OSCE Secretariat.



"Requiem" ©Hamed Hassanzada, with artist

Hamed Hassanzada

Born in Kabul, 1987

I spent my early life in the midst of civil war, explosions and rocket fire; every day there was chaos and riots. I started to paint when I was seven or eight. When I was ten, my family had to emigrate. Later, I returned to Kabul, hoping that global society had brought peace to Afghanistan. But unfortunately, the terror of war impacted me even more. It had broken into the city and the streets and alleys had been changed into battle fields. Still, I supported the young art community, with art courses, exhibitions and workshops. I had several close calls, and my art got bitter and black.

I don't believe in abstract art now. For me, form is important; it's my connection to the world. I care about humanity, about the people in Afghanistan, and they are what I paint. I think Afghan people are caught between tradition and modernity, they are fighting within themselves. They want to become free, but right now they cannot. I'm searching for ways to show these struggles in my art. In one piece, I have four persons behind masks; the masks are maybe a tradition and modernism is behind, two personalities in one person.

For Afghanistan, it's important to be a nation, but we are not a nation right now. We have different groups, Tajik, Pashtun, Uzbek, Hazara, and they do not accept one another. Art doesn't care about ethnicity, it's about deep emotions and can be a powerful bridge for bringing people together. I have many friends from different ethnic groups. We do artwork together, discuss things, organize cafes and galleries.

Friendship is more important than politics. Afghanistan's people are very poor. The country is rich in talent and rich in mineral resources – gas, oil and precious stones. But the people cannot benefit, they are constantly abused by the kings of war. They are working so hard, it's no wonder they don't have time or money for art. Music is more important for them: they invite folk musicians to their weddings and parties to have a good time. But with paintings and sculptures, they are scared. They go to the mosques, and the religious leaders tell them that making portraits and sculptures is not halal. Most of them follow these prohibitions. But still there are some who take an interest and visit exhibitions and galleries.

Something new is starting in Afghanistan, and I hope that soon we will see the change. People like me, artists, poets, actors, cinema directors, are working hard, without support from the government or the people, doing something we believe in. I'm teaching at the contemporary art center in Kabul. I have students who are motivated, who want to learn – about art history, experimental painting, drawing and sculpture. They care about art. They are young, we need to have patience.

Malina Suliman

Born in Kandahar, 1990



© Malina Suliman

Most of my art is politically orientated. I try to tell people to wake up and fight for their rights. In Kandahar and Kabul, I did graffiti, painted or made sculptures about human rights, women's rights, state policy or corruption. Now I am studying in the Netherlands, and I work a lot with performances. My last performance, in a museum, was about Afghanistan's agreements with Russia and Britain about the country's borders, the Durand Line, how borders were exploited to divide the country. Some of my work is very conceptual. "What is identity, what does it really mean? What does one country think about another?" – these are the questions I ask.

Being an artist is a challenge today, especially in Afghanistan. If you are a woman this challenge is doubled. Afghans think a woman should be in the home. Even for men it is difficult to be accepted by their families as artists.

I'm a practicing Muslim, but I try to see how I can reconcile my art with religion. Sculptures and portraits are not allowed. But there are exceptions: the government uses photos for passports. When I make a sculpture dedicated to human rights, I don't perceive it as an idol. It's a way to explain to people a situation they would like to ignore. Sometimes visual things can reach an audience quicker than long discussions. Of course, if I make a sculpture of a naked woman, it will be almost impossible to exhibit. But if it only resembles a woman, that is a way to be not going directly against religion.

Living in the Netherlands, I see Afghanistan from another perspective. I would love to go back and build up an artistic exchange between the two countries. I would love to motivate Afghan women to form communities for mutual support, to see not only my future but Afghanistan's future bright.

Afghans need to be aware of what is happening in other countries, not only politically but in normal life. I did a project about people's wishes, comparing Afghans' and Europeans' dreams. Afghans wished for freedom, peace and security. Europeans dreamt about other things, like meeting their children more often to eat or spend time together. In Afghanistan, people do that in everyday life.

Shamsia Hassani

Born in Teheran, Iran, with Afghan nationality, 1988

I studied classical art at Kabul University, but wanted to take a more modern approach and create art that sends a message. I took part in a graffiti workshop by the British artist, Chu, organized by Combat Communications, and really started to think in that way. Now I work mainly as a graffitist and street artist. I still teach at the university, but in my art I am free. I'm travelling around the world with my work – I just finished a mural on a huge wall in Los Angeles.

Street art is for everybody and everyone can enjoy it. I like to paint on broken-down walls. They carry the mark of war and destruction and become part of my work. People have started to forget about the war, but I want to recall it, paint it on the walls, take the bad memories and make a colourful city.

The main character in my graffiti is a woman. She does all sorts of things, like a character in a movie. She is coming to change things in a positive way. I want to remind people that women can play different roles and that they can be part of society.

From the series "Once upon a time" © Shamsia Hassani

My family supports me, but they worry all the time. For a woman, being on the street is difficult. Thirty minutes is OK, but I cannot paint good quality art in half an hour, I need at least three or four. Sometimes my friends come with me, but of course they are not able to stay the whole time. So usually I work alone. I'm always unsure about what might happen to me. Many people don't like art; they think it is not allowed in Islam. My intuition helps me. If I feel there is some kind of danger, I leave the street, even if my piece is unfinished.

To me, Afghanistan seems like a person who was dead during the war and after the war was reborn. It's like a baby now that needs time to grow up. There are plenty of problems inherited from the war: bombings, gender inequality, street harassment, violence against women. Artists can help, indirectly. They can change people's minds, and people can change society. It is a long and difficult process.



200 years Congress of Vienna, 40 years Helsinki Final Act

Two centuries ago, hundreds of rulers, princes, ministers and representatives descended upon the Habsburg capital, Vienna, to determine the security architecture of Europe after the Napoleonic Wars and the defeat of Napoleon. The final document of the Congress of Vienna was signed in the Ballhaus Palace on 9 June 1815. Today, just a stone's throw away, in the Vienna Hofburg, European security is debated on a weekly basis by the 57 participating States of the OSCE.

Is the OSCE a permanent Congress of Vienna? The near co-incidence of the 200th anniversary of the conclusion of the Congress of Vienna and the 40th anniversary last July of the signing of the OSCE's fundamental document, the Helsinki Final Act, gives occasion to compare. Point by point, the differences prevail.

Both the Congress of Vienna and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE, precursor of the OSCE, at which the Helsinki Final Act was adopted) met at a time when Europe was seriously divided. But the Congress of Vienna was convened in fulfillment of an obligation under a treaty, the Treaty of Paris, to regulate post-war arrangements. By contrast, the delegations to the CSCE met voluntarily, to find ways to de-escalate an ongoing conflict, the Cold War.

Decisions at the Congress of Vienna were taken by the victors and a select group of countries; the general assembly never actually met. The CSCE was resolutely inclusive; to this day, the OSCE takes its decisions by consensus.

The Congress of Vienna was reactive, its statesmen intent on precluding any future actions based on the ideas of the French Revolution. The CSCE delegates looked ahead and the OSCE continues to be guided by the vision of future co-operation.

The Congress of Vienna ushered in an era of peace among states, but repressed the aspiring hopes of its peoples who rose up in citizens' rebellions. The CSCE recognized equal rights and self-determination of peoples as a fundamental principle from the start. Comprehensive security, which includes human rights and fundamental freedoms, is the defining concept of the OSCE.

"Le Congrès danse, mais il ne marche pas" – "The Congress dances, but it doesn't walk/work". These famous words by Prince Charles de Ligne are often cited to sum up the Congress of Vienna. Since the assembly never actually met in plenary, many delegates had plenty of time on their hands, visiting coffee houses and dancing at balls.

Not so for the delegates to the OSCE. With the exception of the annual OSCE Charity Ball, daily reality in the Vienna Hofburg is pedestrian labour: weekly plenaries, daily consultations, working groups and committees, all devoted to enhancing the many aspects of security in Europe. "A l'OSCE, on travaille." – "The OSCE works."

Inspired by the paper "Congress of Vienna and the OSCE: Parallel Lives?", presented on 1 September 2015 to the Law Faculty of the University of Vienna by Ioannis Stribis, Legal Officer in the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna. Responsibility for the content lies with Security Community alone.



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Good Read

Germany: Memories of a Nation by Neil Macgregor

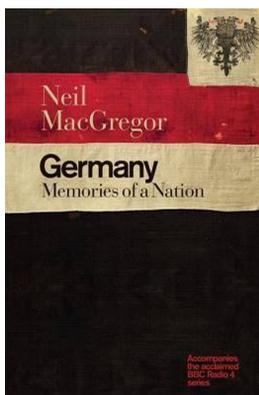
Neil Macgregor's highly original book about Germany begins with a description of the Siegestor, or Victory Gate, in Munich, built in the 1940s to celebrate the valour of Bavaria in the Napoleonic Wars. He compares it with similar triumphal arches in other cities, Paris, London. What makes the Munich arch so interesting, he says, is that while the others look back only to moments of high success, the Munich arch speaks both of the glorious cause of its making and the circumstances of its later destruction. It was badly damaged in the Second World War, but its restoration makes no attempt to

reconstruct the sculpted classical details destroyed by bombs. Instead, there is a blank expanse of stone and, underneath, the words: "Dem Sieg geweiht, vom Krieg zerstört, zum Frieden mahnend" – "Dedicated to victory, destroyed by war, urging peace".

This is telling for the German approach to history, Macgregor argues. "Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the role

of history in Germany today is that, like this arch, it not only articulates a view of the past, but directs the past resolutely and admonishingly forward."

Germany: Memories of a Nation is a story written by an Englishman, the former director of the British Museum. He tells it – fittingly for a history that is "inevitably, confusingly, enrichingly fragmented" – using a string of artifacts and buildings, starting with the Gutenberg press and ending with the Reichstag in Berlin. There are 160 illustrations and the text is preceded by a series of historical maps. Penguin, 640 pages.



German Sauerkraut?

Anyone looking for a German national dish will be hard put to find one. German cooking is a regional affair. Hamburg Matjes (herrings) are as foreign to the south as Bavarian Knödel (dumplings) are to the north. If one asks the poets, it seems the closest one can come to a typical German food is sauerkraut, the popular accompaniment to sausages and beer.

The Swabian bard Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862) wrote: "Auch unser edles Sauerkraut, wir sollen's nicht vergessen; ein Deutscher hat's zuerst gebaut, drum ist's ein deutsches Essen." – "Also our fine sauerkraut, we never should forget: a German made it first of all, so it's a German dish."

But Uhland was wrong about sauerkraut's origin. It is in fact believed to have come to Europe 1,000 years ago from Mongolia, introduced by Genghis Khan after he invaded China. It took root throughout Europe, known as kvashenaya kapusta in Russia, kiseli kupus in Serbia, kwaszona kapusta in Poland, rauginti kopūstai in Lithuania, kysané zelí in the Czech Republic, kyslá kapusta in Slovakia, savanyúkáposzta in Hungary, zuurkool in the Netherlands and choucroute in France.

What is German, however, is the custom of eating sauerkraut on New Year's Eve, popularly believed to line one's pockets in the year to come. Here's to German sauerkraut for a prosperous 2016.

